

THE PROBLEMS FACING MICHIGAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the assembly today on the subject of the problems facing Michigan farmers and ranchers. The conference report on the 1999 Agriculture Appropriations Act helps some of these farmers in facing what is a very, serious problem in this Nation.

What we are faced with is a transition of our farmers and ranchers into a new Federal market-oriented, freedom to farm, public policy. That means that subsidies in place for the last 65 years are being phased out.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that this year in particular farmers are facing a combination of disease, bad weather, a loss of our markets, especially in Asia, and extremely low commodity prices. Farmers are going out of business. Bankruptcies are being advertised throughout the United States as farmers have hit disastrous situations where they feel that they and their families and their kids can no longer survive on that particular farm operation. Often a farm operation that was run by their parents, their grandparents, their great-grandparents can no longer provide a living.

The 1999 appropriations bills deal with some of these problems but not all of the problems. As we phase out and demand that our farmers in this country go into a market-oriented system, other countries remain steadfast in being very protective to make sure that the farmers and ranchers in their countries can remain on the farm; that their country maintains the farming base in their country, the ability to grow food and fiber in that country so that they have assurance that their country will never have to be dependent on other countries for their food.

Our farmers and ranchers in this country not only are facing a smaller market, facing disease and bad weather and the resulting low commodity prices, but are facing an administration which is threatening to impose very restrictive regulations on our farmers that other farmers in other countries do not have to abide by or pay for.

For example if one looks at the Food Quality Protection Act an effort of this body, this Congress, to do away with the old Delaney clause, now we see regulations that are being developed by this administration that suggest that we should do away with herbicides and insecticides because they might have some compounded dangerous effect and be carcinogenic if individuals were to eat pounds or tons of these pesticides.

Now, here is the problem that this country faces: if we impose these kind of nonscientific global warming, air quality, water quality, herbicide, insecticide regulations on our farmers, and farmers in other countries do not have

to abide with those same provisions, that means our farmers are paying huge increased costs. That means by limiting our farmers' ability to farm the same efficient manner as farmers in other nations are farming, it puts our farmers at a competitive disadvantage.

We have to be very, very careful, Mr. Speaker, that we do not force some of our farmers and ranchers out of business because of this mandated inefficiency. Our consumers in this country may have to be dependent on the fruits and vegetables and food products that would be imported from other countries. Right now we enjoy the lowest cost, highest quality food of anyplace in the world. That is because our farmers and ranchers are extremely efficient and our system of distribution is very good in terms of providing good services to the consumers.

While the rest of the economy is generally strong, Mr. Speaker, farmers in our country are facing one of the most difficult years in a long time. The disaster money that is provided in the 1999 appropriation bill will be available to agricultural producers regardless of the type of crop that they produce and is a modest effort to help. While this will not fully reimburse producers for the extreme losses that they are suffering this year, it will help. But in the long run we have to face up to the question of whether or not we are going to allow our farmers and our ranchers to go out of business. That would mean that our consumers are going to become more and more dependent on imported products. Mr. Speaker, if we want to protect this country's ability to produce high quality, low cost food, we can not force our farmers out of business.

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FOCUSING ATTENTION ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

(Mr. SKELTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, focusing public attention on the fight against terrorism is a continuing challenge. The threat of terrorism is an out-of-sight, out-of-mind type issue. When an incident occurs, such as a terrorist bombing or retaliatory action, interest and concern about terrorism quickly moves to the forefront. But usually after a few days or weeks, the terrorist threat tends to be forgotten by the media and the American public.

Mr. Speaker, no matter what the state of public attention, the war against terrorism is ongoing. The capture of those who were involved in the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania was brought about by outstanding CIA and FBI efforts. Just recently, the FBI aided the Ugandan authorities in preventing the bombing of our embassy in Uganda's capital in Kampala.

Here in Congress and across the country, we must be ever mindful of the terrorist threat. The threat is real and the threat will surface again. Federal agencies involved in the fight against terrorism must be supported and encouraged if we are to win this battle against terrorism. The Congress and the American people need to fully support this work as we look to the future.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4104, TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. KOLBE submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 4104) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 105-760)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4104) "making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes", having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, as follows:

In lieu of the matter stricken and inserted by said amendment, insert:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES
SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Departmental Offices including operation and maintenance of the Treasury Building and Annex; hire of passenger motor vehicles; maintenance, repairs, and improvements of, and purchase of commercial insurance policies for, real properties leased or owned overseas, when necessary for the performance of official business; not to exceed \$2,900,000 for official travel expenses; not to exceed \$150,000 for official reception and representation expenses; not to exceed \$258,000 for unforeseen emergencies of a confidential nature, to be allocated and expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury and to be accounted for solely on his certificate, \$123,151,000: Provided, That the Office of Foreign Assets Control shall be funded at no less than \$6,560,800: Provided further, That the Department is authorized to charge both direct and indirect costs to the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the implementation of this floor: Provided further, That the methodology for applying such charges will be the same method used in developing the Departmental Offices Fiscal Year 1999 President's Budget Justification to the Congress.